Employment and training opportunities for veterans

By The N.M. Department of Workforce Solutions

For the Journal

Transitioning from a military profession to a civilian job can be difficult, but if you are a veteran and looking for employment, there are many programs and resources available from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) and the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers around the state. Job training, placement services, employment opportunities, workshops, and much more are available through state and federal programs to meet the needs of veterans and to recognize the sacrifices made by those serving in the Armed Forces.

The U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) office develops various policies and programs to stimulate inter-governmental, private sector, and non-governmental collaboration to assist veterans with employment opportunities and benefits. For more information, visit www.dol.gov/vets.

Through the VETS program, NMDWS utilizes Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives (LVER), who are located in many Workforce Connection Centers across the state of New Mexico. DVOP staff provide intensive services to meet the employment needs of disabled and other eligible veterans. LVER staff have the primary duties of conducting outreach to employers, facilitating job search workshops, and providing employment and training services to veterans. They promote and monitor the participation of veterans in federally-funded programs including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Veterans receive first priority referral to all jobs and training opportunities for which they are qualified. Veterans and eligible spouses have priority over non-covered persons regarding job placement, counseling, testing, supportive services referrals, job development, and job training. Also, veterans seeking federal employment are generally entitled to preference over non-veterans both in federal hiring practices and in retention during reductions in force or layoffs. In New Mexico, there are close to 100 federal agencies with thirty-three thousand employees, and this presents continued employment opportunities to veterans.

The Military Transition Assistance Program (TAP) provides special workshops with information on job hunting skills that will help transitioning service members find employment. Workshops focus on resume writing, cover letters, job-hunting skills, and interviews. The program is a partnership between the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Labor, and the Small Business Administration in conjunction with the Office of Personnel Management and the Department of Education, to give employment and training information to armed forces members within a year to two years of separation or retirement. New Mexico TAP employment workshops are held monthly at Cannon, Holloman, and Kirtland Air Force Bases. Contact a Veterans Representative for more information about the schedule and time of a TAP workshop in your area. Information is available at www.dws.state.nm.us, under the “Veterans” tab.

Employers have a lot of incentives for hiring veterans. Many employers recognize the veterans’ honorable sacrifice for our nation, and they make specific efforts to recruit former military personnel. There are numerous benefits for hiring veterans. Generally speaking, previous military service instills a strong sense of responsibility, an increased ability to work under pressure, and strong leadership skills. For employers who are looking for individuals who can see tasks through to completion, have a high degree of professionalism, and strong problem solving skills, veterans typically make excellent job candidates.

For additional information, please speak to one of our dedicated Veterans Representatives at your nearest Workforce Connection Center. A list of New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers is available at www.dws.state.nm.us, and click on the “Office Locations” button at the top of the site.

This is a regular column written by the N.M. Department of Workforce Solutions. For more information, go to www.dws.state.nm.us.

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